



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
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STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1914,**  
**RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Before the House Committee on  
**PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS**

By

Thomas L. Travis  
Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA)

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) **supports the intent** House Bill 1914.

House Bill 1914 requires the Civil Defense Agency of the County of Hawaii, Department of Emergency Management of the City and County of Honolulu, Emergency Management Agency of the County of Kauai, Emergency Management Agency of the County of Maui, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, and University of Hawaii to each hire one full-time equivalent outreach, education, or volunteerism specialist to conduct disaster preparedness outreach and education initiatives.

While HI-EMA appreciates the proposal to fund another position within the agency to increase public awareness of disaster preparation, the resource analysis and necessary administrative preparation are not done. This position would also not fall into the Governor's administrative budget.

Note: My comments represent HI-EMA concerns at the state emergency management level only. I would defer to the separate comment/testimonies of the county emergency management agencies, as they would be the jurisdictions impacted by this legislation at the local level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 1914.

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DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
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February 4, 2020

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair  
The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Public Safety,  
Veterans, and Military Affairs  
The Senate  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Asuega Gates, and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, and Military Affairs:

**SUBJECT: House Bill 1914 Relating to Disaster Preparedness**

House Bill 1914 requires civil defense and emergency management agencies in each of the counties, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, and the University of Hawaii to each hire one full-time equivalent outreach, education, or volunteerism specialist position and further identifies the methods and strategies that those positions are to use in conducting disaster preparedness outreach and education. Additionally, HB1914 appropriates funds to hire those full-time equivalent positions. The Department of Emergency Management SUPPORTS THE INTENT of HB1914.

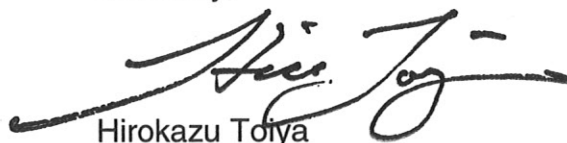
DEM wholeheartedly agrees that public outreach and education for disaster preparedness are worthy endeavors that can substantially improve our collective ability to respond and recover from disasters. DEM recognizes this and currently conducts public outreach and education through a number of means, including some of the methods identified in Section 2 of HB1914. Additional funds appropriated by the state legislature for that purpose could provide much needed support.

That being said, as it is currently written, HB1914 mandates the strategies and methods that each jurisdiction is to use in their public outreach and education efforts. Our concern is that not all of the methods identified in Section 2 will meet the unique needs of each island; each jurisdiction should have the flexibility to meet the goal of enhancing public awareness and preparedness without being constrained to specific methods or strategies mandated through legislation

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair  
The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Vice Chair  
February 4, 2020  
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Thank you for introducing legislation to improve public safety on our islands and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Hirokazu Toiya  
Director



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs  
Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, PhD

Director

University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program

And

Michael Bruno, PhD

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HB 1914 – RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports HB 1914 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Budget.

This Bill is urgently needed because there is more hazard risk than people realize, particularly with regard to hurricanes. Note the following:

- 1) A Pacific Disaster Study conducted after the near hit of Hurricane Lane in 2018, estimated a Category 2 strike on O'ahu would result in 52,000 displaced households and 27 billion dollars in damage.
- 2) A 2019 Hurricane Behavioral Study by FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency found the average citizen was ill-prepared and had not properly gathered their supplies or readied their homes. The number one recommendation was increased education and outreach. The second was help in hardening homes.
- 3) A 2019 Communication Outreach and Education Study conducted by Hawai'i Sea Grant, at the request of the 2017 HI State Legislature, concluded that education and outreach should be significantly increased with traditional and non-traditional methods on a continuous long-term basis to inform and prepare citizens in the State. Thus, the hiring of six education/outreach/volunteerism specialists working in partnership as specified in the report and now supported by HB 1914. The 2019 Communication Study is based on: (a) the Pacific Disaster Study, (b) the Hurricane Behavioral Study, (c) concepts of social science, (d) interviews with all Emergency Management and Civil Defense Agencies at the

State and county level, and (e) lessons learned in conducting hazard preparation outreach and education since 2007.

Hawai'i Sea Grant is well positioned to participate in this partnership and has demonstrated success through its Homeowner's Handbook publication (see website link below). In 2007, Hawai'i Sea Grant produced the *Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards* which provides useful tips regarding readiness for natural hazards such as tsunami, earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. The handbook lists local civil defense and emergency management agency information, provides guidance on evacuation planning, and explains various measures to reduce property damage through home retrofit. This publication has gone through ten print runs with over 100,000 copies and has been modified for eleven other U.S. states and countries based off the Hawai'i book. The 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, released in late 2019, was a major update with more options on home retrofit, as well as evacuation planning guidance. and sections on volcanoes and climate change. It is estimated about 3,000 homes have been retrofitted since 2007, through the education and outreach of many organizations, including Hawai'i Sea Grant.

Hawai'i Sea Grant is committed to continued partnership with all emergency management and civil defense agencies at the State and county level in order to make our communities more resilient and foster a greater culture of preparedness in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

<http://seagrantsoest.hawaii.edu/homeowners-handbook-to-prepare-for-natural-hazards/>

**HB-1914**

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 7:02:49 PM

Testimony for PVM on 2/5/2020 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alan Urasaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments: